2004-05. The number of poor on this basis is estimated as 23.85 crore in 2004-05.

(b) The poverty ratio in the rural areas fell to 21.8 per cent in 2004-05 from 27.1 per cent in 1999-2000 as compared to 21.7 per cent in 2004-05 from 23.6 per cent in 1999-2000 in the urban areas.

(c) The Government has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty: (i) acceleration of economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through provision of basic minimum services; and (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and asset building for the poor. A number of programmes/ schemes have been introduced by the Government from time to time to improve the conditions of the poor people living below the poverty line in rural and urban areas.

Gap between rich and poor

534. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the gap between the rich and those below poverty line is increasing;

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken to alleviate poverty which is a major challenge before the country today; and

(c) whether Government are monitoring that the funds allocated for alleviating poverty are reaching both proper person and not into wrong hands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Planning Commission estimates the number of people living below and above the poverty line. It does not estimate separately the number of rich people.

The per capita consumption expenditure of the people below and above the poverty line estimated from the two latest comparable large sample survey of consumer expenditure of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), which relate to the years 1993-94 (NSS 50th Round) and 2004-05 (NSS 61st Round) are given below.

Consumption Expenditure of People Below and above the Poverty Line
(Rs. Per person per month)

Year	Rural BPL	Rural APL	Gap (APL to BPL Ratio)	Urban BPL	Urban APL	Gap (APL to BPL Ratio)
1993-94 (NSS 50th Round)	159.18	353.64	2.22	212.82	575.41	2.70
2004-05 (NSS 61st Round)	286.13	666.67	2.33	416.14	1272.69	3.06

N.B. BPL = Below the Poverty Line; APL = Above the Poverty Line

From above, the gap in the per capita consumption between the people living above the poverty line (APL) and people living below the poverty line (BPL), measured in terms of the ratio between the two increased from 2.22 in 1993-94 to 2.33 in 2004-05 in rural areas and from 2.70 to 3.06 during the corresponding period in the urban areas.

(b) There is a three-pronged strategy to alleviate and reduce the poverty in the country. These are: (i) acceleration of economic growth, (ii) human and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc; and (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor. A number of programmes /schemes have been introduced by the Government from time to time to improve the conditions of the people living below the poverty line in rural and urban areas.

(c) The implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes is monitored through a comprehensive monitoring mechanisms instituted by the concerned implementing Ministries/Departments. Besides monitoring the implementation of these programmes through the traditional methods, innovative mechanism such as National Level Monitors and collecting information through the independent professional agencies and physical verification of assets/beneficiaries are also employed. The Information Technology is used to keep strict vigilance on the implementation of the Programmes. Elected representatives of the people are also involved in the monitoring mechanism and to keep a close watch on the progress of the programmes.

Allocation of funds for defence services

535. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission has recommended to allocate Rs. 880 crore in 2007-08 and Rs. 980 crore in 2008-09 to the country's defence service in order to enable the forces to vacate an additional 30 MHz of spectrum for telecom services;

(b) whether this would be in addition to Rs. 1000 crore that is currently being provided for vacating 45 MHz of spectrum;

(c) whether Commission has listed relocation compensation to the defence forces for vacating spectrum as amongst the five Flagship Programmes of the Twelfth Plan, which begins in 2007-08; and

(d) whether Government have agreed to implement its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) No, Sir. Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 150 crore for the year 2007-08 to DOT for providing OFC network to the country's defence services and to enable them to vacate 45 MHz of spectrum for Telecom Services.

(b No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.